

when it came around to 1995, he vetoed a budget that would have balanced the budget. The President's plan is more taxing, more spending, more rhetoric. It is time to stop taxing, time to stop spending, and it is time to stop the rhetoric and help America's families keep more of their take-home pay in their back pocket.

In the State of Montana, we have quite a lot of dirt between light bulbs in that part of the world—148,000 square miles, 850,000 people. People rely on their automobiles in Montana as much as those who live in a big city, maybe more so. We also have a very healthy tourist industry that thrives there. That is based on fuels and the availability of fuels. So families and agriculture suffer from the high gas tax, and so do businesses. The price of processing, the price of transportation for all the products that are produced in rural America, significantly adds to the expenses. They cannot always be passed on to the consumer. America's families and businesses are hurt by this tax.

The truth is that President Clinton raised the gas tax for purely political reasons. He had a choice of cutting spending, but he chose not to do it. He had an opportunity to forgo a regressive and punitive tax on the middle and lower class, but he chose not to do it. I believe it is time to fix this political mistake by not only eliminating the 4.3-cents-per-gallon gas tax, but also increasing the family's take-home pay with a \$500 per child bonus. We need other tax cuts for families.

We are in a time when the cattle market is really low. We have farmers suffering. And, of course, yes, the grain market is very high. But if you want to do something for agriculture and take out the sort of "pockets of pain," we should look at income averaging again, allow agriculture at the production level to keep some of their money in their pockets during the time when it is profitable so they can ride out the rough years that will come—always come—in agriculture.

We promised to do that for the middle class. That was vetoed. All rhetoric. It is time to lessen that tax burden, not only to working families, but all Americans. In an era when he proclaimed big Government is over, Government keeps on growing.

So with America on my mind this morning, I call upon all of us to take a look at this gas tax, to cut Government spending, and to get our country back on a budget that will keep us fiscally responsible and fiscally solid. I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Mr. GRASSLEY is recognized for 5 minutes.

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 1721 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from New Mexico has 5 minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I am pleased to yield to my friend for any statement he has and take my 5 minutes after that.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Senator from New Mexico for his graciousness.

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1722 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 8 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. BINGAMAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1723 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LESS GOVERNMENT AND MORE FREEDOM

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, today is a very special day for Texans this year because as of today, May 2, working men and women in Texas are for the first time in 1996 working for themselves. To this point in 1996, every single day from January 1 until today, every penny earned by the average working family in my State has gone to government, and only beginning today are the working families of Texas working for themselves and for their families.

Let me share these numbers with my colleagues because I think they are very revealing of a fundamental problem in America.

By the estimates of the U.S. census the average family of four in Texas today earns \$42,570. This year that average Texas family will pay \$9,522 in Federal taxes, payroll taxes, and income taxes being taken out of their pocket and being brought to Washington and spent. They will also pay \$4,781 in State and local taxes. In total, the average family of four in Texas this year will pay \$14,303 in taxes out of an income of \$42,570.

If in 1950, someone had predicted that the day would come when working families in Texas would be sending \$1 out of every \$3 they earn to government, no one in 1950 would have believed that could be possible. I remind my colleagues that in 1950 the average family in America with two children sent \$1 out of every \$50 it earned to Wash-

ington, DC. Today the average family in America is sending \$1 out of every \$4 it earns to Washington, DC. And the sad, and to a certain degree, untold story is that, even if we do not start a single new government program during the next 20 years but simply pay for the government we have already committed to, the average family in America will send \$1 out of every \$3 to Washington within 20 years, and \$1 out of every \$2 in 30 years. That is a future that, at least standing here today, it is hard for me to imagine. But I think the sobering lesson is who could have imagined in 1950, when the average family in America with two children was sending \$1 out of every \$50 to Washington, DC, that today, 46 years later, the average family in America would be sending \$1 out of every \$4 it earns to Washington, DC.

I will leave it to each American to try to answer the question as to whether they are getting their money's worth from our government, whether, if they got to keep more of what they earned, they could do a better job spending it on their own family and investing it in their own future, than the government is now doing. I believe that the answer that most Americans would give is that, if they got to keep more of their own money to invest in their own children, that they could make a sounder investment both for themselves and for their children than their Government is now making.

Texas is a blessed State in many ways. But one of the ways we are blessed is that our tax burden at the State and local level is lower than the national average. So it will be on May 7 that the average American family will work for itself for the first time in 1996. But today is the first day of 1996 that working families in Texas will be working for themselves. From this point on during the year of 1996 they will be able to keep what they earn to invest in their future and their family.

I believe it is a national crisis that the average working family in Texas has worked from January 1 until May 2 simply to pay tribute to government. I do not believe the government we are giving them is worth what they are paying for it. I think we need to dramatically revise government spending, and cut it. I think we need to let working families keep more of what they earn.

There is one institution in America that is more effective and more important than any other. And that institution is the family. It is the institution that provides cohesion to our society, it is the institution that passes on our values and our traditions to our children, and yet it is the one institution that we consistently starve of the resources they need to do this job.

So I just simply wanted to join the people of my State in celebrating the fact that as of today they are working for themselves. For the last 3 years the tax burden on the average Texas family and the average American family has

risen, and risen at an alarming rate. I believe this trend has to stop, and I am dedicated to the principle that we need less government and more freedom, that government is too big, too powerful, too expensive, and spends too much of the money of working families, and as a result they have the opportunity to invest too little of what they earn.

I want to see this changed, and I think the real debate that we face here in Washington, a debate that is very seldom defined here on the floor of the Senate, is a choice between unlimited government and unlimited opportunity. And we have to choose. I want to make it clear on the first day of this year that Texans have worked for themselves that I choose opportunity because I know that if the average working family in America could represent itself in the U.S. Senate for one day and could cast a vote as to whether we need more government, or whether we need more freedom in America, they would cast their vote in favor of less government and more freedom.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I was intrigued by listening to the Senator from Texas, and I wanted to make a couple of observations about it before I discussed what I came to discuss.

This issue that the American people have paid taxes to a certain day and somehow after that it does not affect them escapes me. I know the Senator from Texas taught economics for some while. He would understand I think that the four largest areas of public spending are education, State and local and Federal, mostly State and local, defense, Social Security and Medicare.

When the American people pay taxes to build schools to send their children to schools, I wonder if the Senator is suggesting that somehow they have not made an investment in themselves in January, February, and March to build those schools, to pay those teachers, and give their kids an education. I do not think he would believe that.

If he is believing somehow that the Social Security checks will go back to help senior citizens, that Medicare Program that helps pay medical bills for senior citizens in January, February, and March does not represent an investment in themselves when people pay taxes and get back both an education system and an opportunity to defend our country, including jobs in Texas in defense plants, and Social Security checks for senior citizens, and Medicare payments for health care for senior citizens, I think not. I think not.

I agree with the Senator from Texas. I would like to see lower taxes for everybody. We are trying to reduce the size of Government. In fact, there are 200,000 fewer Federal workers now than at the beginning of 1992. We are reducing the size of Government. He will not find an argument from me about that.

But when someone suggests somehow that all of the money paid goes to Government and has no relationship to the individuals, they are suggesting that the investment parents make in the school system that benefits their children—because I think parents have pride in building a school system that works and being able to send their kids to good schools—I think the Senator misunderstands that there are a whole lot of the American people who think it is a good investment for them to send their kids to good schools and do not mind paying taxes for schools that work.

I did not come to the floor to talk about that, but I am always intrigued by the discussions about tax issues.

RESCINDING THE GAS TAX

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, one of the things I wanted to talk about this morning was the gas tax.

I voted for the provision in 1993 that was the largest deficit reduction act in history. I am still pleased I voted for that. We did not get one vote on the other side of the aisle even by accident. All of us on this side of the aisle had to vote for that and pass it by one vote. We did not get one vote even by accident. But I am still glad I voted for it.

Did I like everything in it? No, I did not. But the Federal deficit has decreased by nearly 50 percent since that was enacted.

We have had some folks come to the floor recently saying let us repeal the 4.3-cent gas tax. I guess the motivation for coming to the floor to do that is to say that gas prices have spiked up in this country from 20 to 25 cents a gallon. The American people are anxious and concerned about that, so some people come to the floor and say let us repeal the 4.3-cent gas tax. I ask why the 4.3 cents? Why not the 4.3 cents and the 10 cents that Senator DOLE has proposed previously and voted for. Why not decrease the whole thing if you want to do it? But if you decrease it a penny, if you decrease the gas tax at all, I am going to be here with an amendment insisting that that reduction go into the pockets of consumers who are now spending more money at the gas pumps, not into the pockets of the oil industry.

I took a look at some figures yesterday when we were talking about this subject. Let me tell my friends what has happened in the oil industry. God bless them; I think profits are fine, and I am happy they are doing well. Chevron posted gains of 34 percent last year, an increase in profits; Amoco, a 39-percent increase in profits; Texaco, profits up 30 percent; Mobil, profits up 16 percent; Exxon did just fine as well, up 14 percent; Shell, up 42 percent in the first quarter of this year.

Those are oil company profits. Now, if somebody comes to the floor of the Senate and says, let us cut gas taxes, if they do not support a provision that requires a cut in the gas tax to be

ratcheted down in the price at the pumps and therefore go into the pockets of the consumers, guess who is going to pocket the reduction of the 4.3-cent gas tax? The oil industry.

Frankly, I am pleased that the Federal deficit has decreased, and I am willing to cast votes to decrease it all the way. We ought to balance the budget. That is why I say I am still proud I cast that vote in 1993, and that included some tough issues, including a gas tax. But the plain fact is we are probably going to deal with a gas tax repeal here of some type where the majority has the right to bring that to the floor and not with respect to the merits of the issue.

I will also, in this Chamber, when we deal with the gas tax, propose an amendment that says, if we cut the gas tax, let us make sure it goes in the right pocket. The oil industry has some deep pockets, and they are doing just fine, thank you. The consumer is paying 20 or 25 cents a gallon more, and the question is, why? Because of the gas tax? No. The industry decided because of supply and demand, they say, that the price had to spike up, so the price spiked up and American drivers take it in the pocketbook.

If someone wants to relieve the American drivers of a 20- or 25-cent price spike, the first thing we ought to do is launch an investigation into what caused that price to spike up 20 or 25 cents a gallon. Who decided to do that? There was no debate about that. We had a debate about the gas tax. There was no debate by the public on this issue of a 20-, 25-cent increase in the gas prices. That is done in a room someplace, I assume. They say, well, the supply and demand relationship has changed. Therefore, let us charge the drivers 20 or 25 cents more a gallon.

I say to the folks who come to the floor of the Senate that, if we want to do something for American drivers, for those who are paying the bills, let us investigate what has caused this spike in gas prices, No. 1. No. 2, if you do offer proposals to reduce the gas tax, I am going to offer an amendment to insist that that reduction go into the pockets of the taxpayers in this country, not into the pockets of the oil industry.

How do we do that? It is not very easy to do that because you have to make sure that that decrease finds its way to the price at the pump so that it is lowered for the American consumer. But if folks come here and say, let us ratchet down the gas tax and do not do that, you know exactly where that money is going. It is not going into the pockets of somebody who is going to fill their tank tomorrow. It is going to go into the deep pockets of the large multinational corporations that decide they are going to profit because of what the Congress has done.

So those are issues, I think, we will work our way through, Mr. President, in the coming week or two. When we do, I think Members ought to understand that some of us will absolutely